

## THE SPRING SKIRTS.

Those for Street Suits Are Plain.

FLOUNCES FOR SUMMER FROCKS.

A Topic on Which Fashion Authorities Differ.

Conflicting Opinions About the Lines of the Modish Skirt—Features of the Imported Models—Coats and Boleros of the Costumes for Street Wear—Beautiful Effects Obtained by Means of the New Checks and Veilings—Frills and Flounces of the Frocks in Soft Light Materials.

Who shall decide when doctors disagree? How shall one plan her spring frocks when no two Paris correspondents tell the same fashion tale?

Concerning the coat and bodice, there is a soothing unanimity of testimony, though a surprising variety of possibilities, but a casual perusal of skirt literature in the many fashion journals is enough to make the staidest head dizzy.

One autocrat sings praise of "the graceful flounce, which is the keynote of the season's skirt." A second states firmly that only the untripped skirt is truly chic. A third chronicles a decrease in skirt fulness and straighter lines. Then comes a solemn dissertation upon the great fulness prescribed for the summer skirt.

We read that the Parisian skirt is slowly



but surely shortening in front and at the sides and narrowing to a train at the back; and then we turn to an uncompromising statement that the full, round skirt, long in front and on the sides and without definite train, has things all its own way.

The only method of clearing up one's own ideas and coming to some definite conclusion concerning the season's skirt consists in a general and careful survey of the latest imported models and heart to heart talks with dressmakers folk who have recently returned from Paris or who have trustworthy representatives in that city and are kept in touch with every smallest move in the ateliers of the great Parisian dress makers.

A letter from one such representative, written after a hurried run to the Riviera, gave much space to discussion of the skirt problem and explained the wide divergence of opinion among our home authorities, for it seems that all have spoken some truth and that the fault has lain in omission rather than commission.

The skirts of street frocks are unquestionably less voluminous than they threatened to be and in some instances were. They are, in a vast majority of the best models, smooth fitting over the hips, and though they flare considerably and the flare begins just below the hip curve, there is nothing extreme in the general outline.

The circular cut, put aside for a time, has reassessed itself and is gaining in popularity, makers having realized the truth that it is one of the best solutions of the fitted top and flare bottom problem. Probably the vogue of check and plaid materials



is largely responsible for the return of the circular skirt, the model being especially chic when developed in check or plaid, cut on the cross and with a seam down the middle front.

For the separate walking skirt, dear to the summer girl, the irregular checks or plaids, preferably in black and white and in the light weight smooth surface suitings, bid fair to be exceedingly popular, and though these skirts are made up in all the prevailing ways, the bias circular skirts with front seam and perhaps two side plaits down the middle front are meeting with particular success.

If a smart little bolero or other short coat accompanies this walking skirt so much the better, but the separate skirt is a desirable thing in the summer wardrobe, for a complete tailor suit is expensive and there are many times when the weather is too warm for a coat, so the coat of the general utility

walking costume is likely to be good long after the skirt is shabby.

The skirt of many gowns is another model well liked, but one must not make the mistake of shaping the gowns so that the skirt clings tightly down to the knees and begins a sharp flare there. Such skirts were always ugly, though they were worn to a considerable degree some time ago.

The new gored skirt is smooth over the hips, but easy below the hip line and quite full before it reaches the knees. The back, too, though it may close snugly and smoothly at the top, falls in fulness below the placket, so that there is none of the ugly inward curve of the back seam which was once an offence.

Yokes over hips are much used, although the skirt yoke was voted entirely out of

falling in straight unplaited folds below the stitched plaits.

These skirts are more easily fitted than the skirt with its plaits pressed all the way to the hem, and may be kept in better shape, because they do not muss so readily and are more easily pressed and cleaned than the skirt with its pleated skirts.

With the long coats of redingote suggestion, which unquestionably must be reckoned with this season, the plain gored skirt simply full and without trimmings or the skirt plaited over the hips and straight below, after the fashion just described, is usually chosen, and the gored skirt is, perhaps, the more practical for the street suit, because, at best, holding up a skirt under one of the long coats is difficult

is of exceptional cut and alterations are made by a very clever artist.

Some of the new long coat effects seen on the Riviera and on that trial ground of new fashions, the Parisian stage, are remarkably good; but they are, as a rule, so complicated that they demand competent handling.

Take, for example, the two models sketched here. One is in pastel blue tulle, with a long plaited redingote, which is cut in front so that the upper coat front falls over the skirt.

Embroidery of little roses trims the collar and cuffs, which are finished by frills of valenciennes and three large buttons in enamel repeating the embroidery colors are set on each side of the front. A charming blouse of pastel blue mousseline de

stitched down almost to the bottom. Little curved pockets on the fronts were trimmed in a fine white braid and tiny buttons covered with orange silk, and the cuffs and waistcoat—the latter of white silk—had similar trimming, while at the throat the coat was held by a soft narrow cravat of orange silk embroidered in black and white.

The design was simple in the extreme, but the color scheme gave great charm to the new frocks. Surely never were the colorings of all materials so beautiful as now.

Fancy veilings are conspicuous among the materials offering lovely color combinations, though so soft are most of the colors that conspicuous seems out of place in connection with them. One importer



style by rash prophets last season, and sometimes this yoke continues in a shallow back yoke, though more often the back, like the front, is in straight plaits of some sort from waistband to hem.

The use of the side yoke gives an opportunity for the introduction of fulness below smooth hip lines, and this fulness usually takes the form of side or box plaits, continuous, or in panels.

Certain smart models have a plain narrow front breadth of box plait suggestion cut in one with the hip yoke, and in one with this yoke also are flat panels running from yoke to hem in side and back, while between them the skirt falls in side plaits or box plaits.

Plaittings are set into the lower parts of street skirts in many clever ways, but almost always there is the smoothly fitted

business.

The short skirt has no real affinity to the long coat and the two are unbecomingly awkward together, but they will doubtless be seen united, for the freedom of the short walking skirt has spoiled us for long street skirts, yet many women admire the long tailor made coat and will insist upon having it in walking costumes.

This long coat may take the tight fitting,

sole with lace guimpe and surplice drapery of the mousseline, trimmed with embroidered galon and valenciennes frills, accompanying the coat and skirt.

The other costume has also a plaited redingote, trimmed in stitching and little crescents of cloth set with small buttons. A waistcoat of silk in antique embroidered design with border fold of cloth gives a beautiful color relief to the delicate tone of the gown.

Very attractive little costumes in the blurred plaids and checks, made with short saque coats and walking skirts, are shown among recent importations and are delightful for youthful wearers, though the short saque coat seldom lends itself satisfactorily to the figure of maturity.

One of the prettiest of these models was

is showing a remarkable line of veilings in fine checks and stripes, with variations from the ordinary check and stripe veiling so generally in evidence.

Minute checks of silver gray and delicate lilac are separated by single thread lines of white silk. Grass and white, almond green and white, pastel blue and champagne, delicate orange and white checks

are marked off by like lines of white silk, and very fine stripes in the same colorings are separated by lines of white silk. Stripes in three tones, blue, green and black, are separated by the white silk thread, and in all these instances the gleaming white hair-line gives a surprising amount of originality and charm to the fabrics.

There are, too, very fine checks and stripes in such colorings as those already mentioned, but with small silk dots shaded or in the two tones of the material sprinkled over the surface. For example, a lilac and white check, infinitesimally small, is scattered with small silk dots shading from lilac to white.

An exquisite voile in tiny checks of soft orange and white had scattered over its surface at wide intervals a design of two

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small interlacing rings, one embroidered in white silk, one in gold thread. This same interlacing ring design, only in black and gold, is successfully used, too, upon plain dark blue voile, and another dark blue voile has large interlacing rings, an inch and a half in diameter, one in the shade of the blue material, the other in a dark dull green.

Exceedingly fine stripes of light blue and white, French rose and white, light orange and white, etc., are fresh and dainty in veiling; and, indeed, although there has been much talk of a decline in the popularity of the voile class of fabrics, the manufacturers have evidently felt no apprehension on the subject, and have expended much of their effort upon the new voiles. A delightful little frock in one of the finely checked voiles, trimmed in tulle with little buttons and simulated eyelets, the whole in willow green and white, is among the cuts this week and would be an easy model for the home dressmaker.

The vogue of the surplice bodice lines is apparent in everything from street frock to evening gown. The mode is no only pretty and becoming, but within the scope of the unimpaired seamstress.

Surplice folds are, as a rule, easily arranged; and if the V-shaped opening is to be filled by a plastron, such a plastron is more easily fitted and made than a round guimpe. In the surplice evening bodice, the V opening, if sloping in a graceful line from shoulders to bust, is usually too low, and this is remedied by a little tucker of lace or tulle or mousseline, visible only across the front.

The evening gown sketched here illustrates this point and is a good model for silk, satin, or pe or any material having body and draping qualities, though not a youthful gown. The full panels of net set in the skirt bottom with two coarces trimming each panel, give a graceful fulness, and this idea is of value in making over a skirt not full enough around the bottom for modishness.

And this brings us back to our starting point—the skirt.

While the street skirt is, perhaps, less full than it promised to be, and has discarded fulness in favor of plainness and long lines, the sheer wash frocks and the dressy frocks in soft, light weight material show flounces and horizontal trimmings quite as often, if not oftener, than plain vertical lines.

There are fewer of the little ruches than there were last season, but the bouillon holds its prestige, and one still sees the silk covered cords, the piping and the shirring. The soft, full skirts, unlike the street skirts, are often shirred into the waistband, falling free below, but, on the other hand, there are many models with shallow hip yoke of shirring or fine plaits. Even among the sheer skirts one frequently notes an absence of bottom trimming or a bottom trimming only of nuns plaits or of some flat band or inset band; but the fine lace or embroidery flouncings and plain flounces trimmed with lace, tucks, etc., are distinctly popular.

Often, however, the flounces are not continued across the front breadth, this breadth being left plain, or trimmed vertically, or arranged in petticoat fashion. One, two or three flounces are used, the lower sometimes set on to the edge of the upper with shirring or tucking so that the several flouncings make in reality but one deep flounce, much fuller at bottom than at top.

Such an arrangement is illustrated among the frocks in the large group. The full embroidery sleeve of this model, falling over the elbow puff of plain batiste, is a pretty and simple sleeve design for a lingerie frock.

The skirt of the wash frock not intended for morning wear is of the round length, and a majority of the house frocks and the youthful dinner and evening frocks are of this length, but formal evening gowns for older women often incline toward the longer and narrower train. This is, of course, especially true of the princess gown, which is very modish and does not lend itself to the round skirt.

For morning street wear, the skirt clears; but although an effort has been made to shorten the skirt of the dressy afternoon street and visiting frock to walking length,

it has not found general acceptance, and the long, round skirt still holds sway.

Two of the frocks in the central group were described last week, though, by chance, the sketches were not included in last week's cuts, but the sketches really explain themselves and are so pretty that it would be a pity to omit them altogether. The transverse tucking with quarter inch intervals, which is the original and feature of the one frock in finest lawn, is most effective and acceptably inexpensive, and the union of eyelet embroidered fine linen and plain linen in the other model is simple enough, though it may appear complicated at first glance.

Linen, lawn, batiste, etc., embroidered merely in eyelets, may be bought by the yard in all of the best shops, and while not so lovely as the intricate openwork embroidery designs may be used most effectively in combination with plain material, and is not shockingly expensive. In fine linen it makes very smart loose coats or blouse-bolero coats with belts and long or short coat skirts, and with collars and cuffs of plain linen trimmed in frills of valenciennes.

One of these coats lined with white or tinted India silk will be found a delightful addition to the summer outfit, and with the aid of a good pattern might readily be managed at home. One actually made at home by a clever girl, who copied it from a model shown in a Fifth Avenue shop, is a short, loose paletot lined with a luscious shade of light orange taffeta, and on the collars and turnback cuffs are set frills of valenciennes in scallopes, with French knots in orange sprinkled over the part of the linen not covered by the lace.

Big coats framed of several frills of valenciennes surrounding a button mould covered with plain linen and embroidered in orange French knots are set down the fronts of the coat. The little garment has a tremendously knowing air, yet was easily made.

The popularity of Irish crochet waxes rather than wanes, and much of it, both in the real and in imitation, will be seen upon the summer's gowns. The new handkerchiefs, too, are attaining much popularity and are lovely in design.

Valenciennes is queen of the fine laces, as it was last season, and the wide flouncings, allovers, insertions, etc., are more used than ever before, while the narrow edges and insertions are having the usual summer demand. Embroidery and lace are combined in every possible way, and among the novelties are beautiful allovers, which have a lace net ground over which runs a bold design in remarkably heavy raised embroidery.

There are, too, allover valenciennes, laces into which batiste embroidery designs are apparently woven, not inset, and the robe patterns show lace and embroidery mingled in bewildering but beautiful fashion.

### HER LIGHT ROOM.

A Novel Convenience Added by a Studios Woman to Her House.

"I found it so impossible to get a thoroughly good daytime light on my sewing or book in our house when we moved to New York that I decided to ask my husband for what I called a light room for my anniversary present," tells a woman devoted to her needle and to reading. The light room is built over the butler's pantry extension. It opens from her bedroom.

"At last I have a corner on light," the woman continued with a deep sigh of satisfaction. "That's more than most city people can boast of."

The light room is practically all windows. The woman regulates the light with shades. Some draw up, some draw down—some run across the skylight ceiling.

"I never let myself sit reading or sewing in an all-round glare of light," she said. "That isn't good for the eyes. I arrange the light to fall on my work, and here I can have a window just where I want one, and these very thin curtains protect me from the view of neighbors."

"My family laughed at my idea until after the room was built. Now, it is all I can do to keep it to myself. I call it the sun parlor. It's a fine place to dry one's hair in after a shampoo, and it is splendid for sunning oneself when one does not feel well enough to go out."

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are marked off by like lines of white silk, and very fine stripes in the same colorings are separated by lines of white silk. Stripes in three tones, blue, green and black, are separated by the white silk thread, and in all these instances the gleaming white hair-line gives a surprising amount of originality and charm to the fabrics.

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in a blurred plaid formed of small checks in a delicate gray, which was almost a tea leaf green, combined with white and showing at wide intervals a mere tinge of orange in one of the very light pinkish yellow tones. The skirt was plainly plaited around the hips and full below.

The short saque was plaited at the sides of the front and back, but the plaits were

severely plain tailored form, with or without hip seams; or it may be draped and voluminous after the fashion of the genuine redingote; or it may be plaited at the shoulders and throughout its length, though fitting snugly and worn with or without a belt; or it may be somewhat on the Russian order, with a very slight blouse, a belt and long plaited or plain skirts below the belt.

This last idea of the bolero, bloused or with loose fronts falling over the belt in front, and with long skirts, is, at present, very prominent among the new ready made street suits for spring, but it is not really new, and not particularly becoming, and one is more likely to be well fitted and achieve smartness in a ready made bolero model than in a long coat, unless the latter

hip and the unbroken line of seam, plait or trimming down the middle front.

The skirts familiar throughout the winter, and made with plaits stitched round the hips, but falling loosely below, are as well liked as ever, but the plain skirt is not so popular as the skirt plaited in groups or in alternating narrow box plaits and groups of side plaits, and